



Have You Heard?

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Home Economist

Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

Are you one of the many parents who soothe your cranky or crying baby with a bottle of milk, formula, or juice during naps or evening bedtime? If so, you could be harming your child's teeth. If you must put your baby to bed with a bottle, fill it only with water.

This advice appears in "Prevent Baby Bottle Tooth Decay," a new fact sheet published by the National Institute of Dental Research. Prolonged bottle feeding of babies with sugary liquids can lead to baby bottle tooth decay, a severe form of dental decay and a leading oral health problem among children under three years of age.

When an infant sucks on a bottle during the day, saliva helps wash

away sugars and acids that can cause tooth decay. During sleep, however, saliva flow is reduced. If your child falls asleep with a bottle, sugary liquids may not be swallowed quickly. They may drip continuously and remain in the mouth for hours. Bacteria naturally present in the mouth convert the sugars in these drinks to acids that can decay teeth. The longer baby bottle nursing with sweet liquids continues, the greater the damage.

Your child's baby teeth are important for proper chewing and nutrition, clear speech, and good appearance. But they also are highly susceptible to decay. Baby bottle tooth decay can occur rapidly, involve many teeth, and cause severe pain. Upper front teeth are most likely to be damaged,

although others may be affected as well. When baby teeth are lost too early, permanent teeth may grow in crooked or crowded.

Buying Pumpkins

Have you ever tried to make a pumpkin pie from a pumpkin intended to be used as a Jack-O-Lantern? It's not easy is it? That's because there are two types of pumpkins and most people cannot tell the difference. The first, called a field pumpkin, is usually at least 12 inches in diameter and it has a ridged angular stem. If you were to cut across the stem it would be star shaped. These are the best choices for decorating.

When you are picking a pumpkin for Halloween pick one that is fairly light in weight for its size... it will have less meat and will be easier to cut. There is also more room inside for a candle.

No matter what size pumpkin you choose, pick one that is flattened on the ends, that way it will not have a tendency to tip over. This is especially important if you intend to put a candle in it.

Some other pumpkin choosing tips include selecting one with the stem still attached. It will be less mature and will hold up better if you are buying early. Store it

below room temperature and above 40 degrees. Both chilling and high temperatures cause it to spoil quickly.

Now for you bakers... a sugar or pie pumpkin is usually smaller than a field pumpkin and the color is usually a much darker orange. It has a very dense flesh that would make carving it a chore and once you have opened it up you will see

that the flesh is also darker with a finer texture.

When your pie is complete... do not be surprised if the end result does not look as firm as a pie from a canned pumpkin pie mix. Commercial pie mix is usually combination of one-third pumpkin to two-thirds squash. The manufacturers add squash to give more body to the product.

Leaf Raking Pays Off

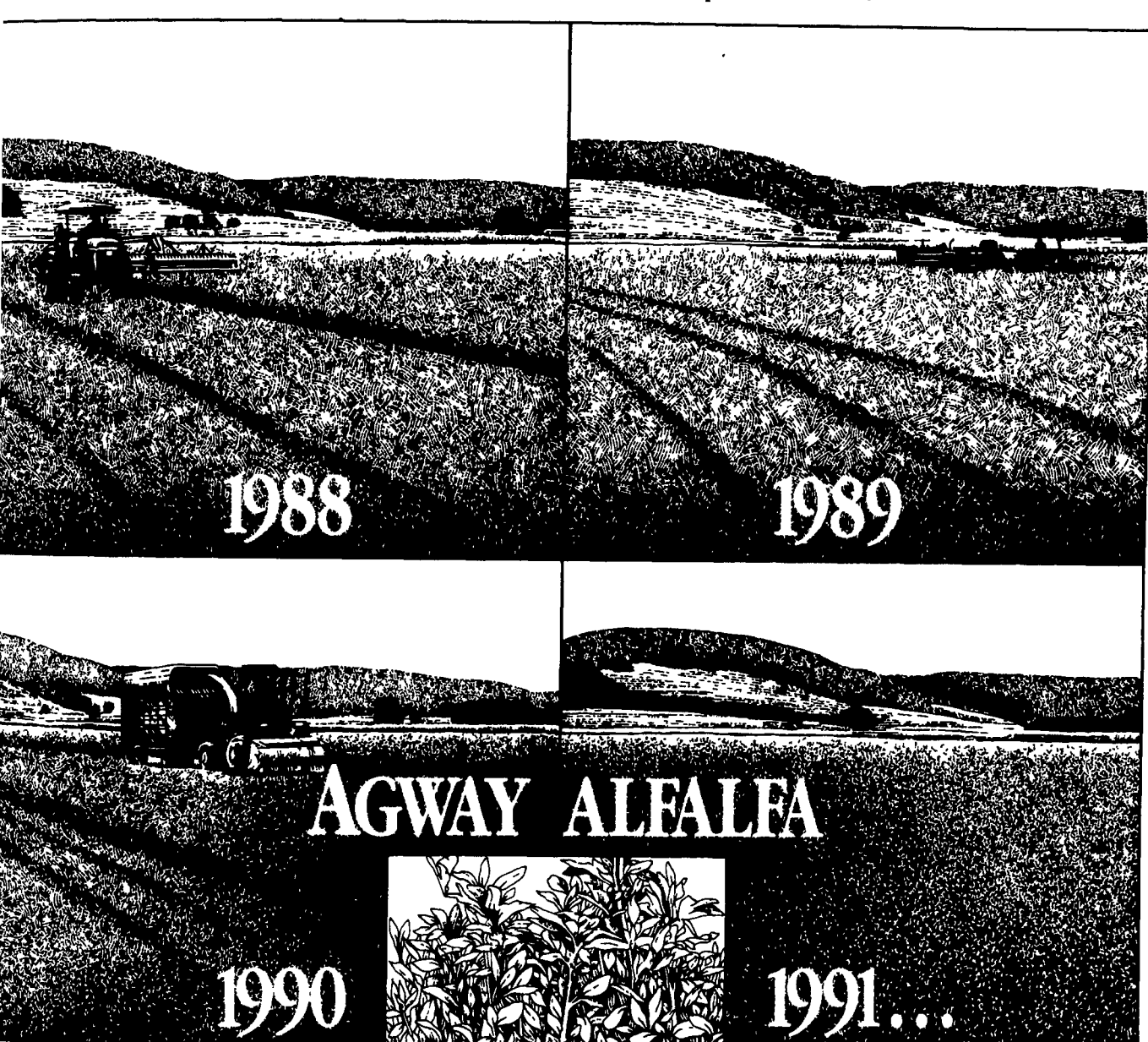
A necessary investment for the home gardener interested in maintaining a lush lawn is some muscle power behind a rake. The season of raking the fallen leaves is now upon us and raking the leaves several times during the fall and early winter will help to prevent serious injury to your lawn.

Established as well as newly seeded lawns need leaf removal if you want to avoid damage to the lawn grasses. Susan Goldsworthy, Delaware County Cooperative Extension Horticulturalist says it may seem like a futile job to start raking leaves while there are so many still clinging to the trees, but putting it off until the last leaf falls

certainly is not the best way to care for your lawn.

Leaves left on the lawn will smother the grass quickly. The danger of smothering is compounded when showers wet the leaves and forms a tight mat of them. It is especially important to rake these wet leaves, although they are more difficult to rake.

Don't allow leaves to remain on the lawn because of their fertilizing value. Their presence will cause more damage to the lawn grasses than the benefit, if any, as fertilizer. The best way to dispose of leaves is to put them into a compost pile. Such compost piles later provide a good source of free organic material.



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